

# SPRINGSTIMES

Your Sandy Springs News Source



## Greetings!

At this writing, the City Council and I are still in the midst of the budget process. By the time this appears in print, the final budget will have been adopted and the millage rate set.

So, while I cannot give final results here, I have a pretty clear idea of where we are headed and can give at least two major conclusions: There will be no increase in the property tax millage rate, which means that if your house was not reassessed, you will see no change in your property tax for the City of Sandy Springs. The other major conclusion is that there will be continued emphasis on the expenditure side to catch up on years of neglect in the maintenance and improvement of the basic infrastructure of Sandy Springs.

On the maintenance side, there will be continued paving of streets to salvage road surfaces that the County never cared for. On the improvement side, there will be intersection improvements, which are a direct way of mitigating traffic congestion without the actual addition of lanes. There will be further attention to the installation of equipment on traffic signals that adjust to changes in congestion.

The above mentioned expenditures are capital expenditures. There will also be additional costs on the operational side, such as more patrol officers and detectives as we continue to address the crime rate in Sandy Springs. Obviously, the escalating costs of fuel and the need to address cost of living increases to maintain parity for our employees require more operational dollars as well.

Fortunately, due to superior management, the City of Sandy Springs was able to conserve approximately \$9.4 million in the General Fund for the year ending June 30, 2008. Some revenues were higher than expected, and departments were able to hold down costs with a constant eye on efficiency and a lean profile. The list of unfunded capital needs that the Council considered added up to \$240 million. The Council has determined to address these needs and to make a dent in this huge backlog of capital items.

New State mandates on stormwater management compel a major assessment of our stormwater system, including the condition of the metal corrugated pipes that have been collapsing and causing sinkholes. The regulatory requirements alone will cost \$1.6 million the first year, and this does not include any money to fix the corroding pipes and holes. Making a small dent into that problem this year adds another \$500,000.

Fulton County decided that it would no longer subsidize the emergency medical system or the ambulance service. Without this subsidy, the response time of the ambulances would rise to an unacceptable 12 minutes, which could be a death knell for cardiac patients. Therefore the City, together with the other North Fulton cities, is taking over this responsibility, which means an additional start-up of \$450,000.

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## Recreation and Parks Master Plan Set, Hammond Park Improvements Coming Soon

Based on a six-week online survey conducted with the residents of Sandy Springs, recreation and parks are very important to their quality of life. The most requested facilities by those polled were athletic fields, an aquatic center and more walking and jogging trails. Secondly, residents who took the online survey also requested dog parks and bikeways.

There are some reoccurring themes seen in the surveys, and the City is beginning to work on how to make those suggestions a reality for Sandy Springs residents. According to Ronnie Young, Recreation and Parks

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# City Stands Up Emergency Operations Center

The City of Sandy Springs is prepared on many fronts for an emergency. One aspect the public may not see is the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is designed based on National Incident Management System (NIMS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) guidelines. The organization of the EOC and work flow/decision making design is based on State and Federal guidelines. The EOC may be used for anything from icy weather to hazardous spills to an airplane crash.

Inside the center, there are four plasma TVs for monitoring weather and media, a weather radio and a cabinet of maps for use in emergency planning and coordination. There are two Smart Boards for displaying and diagramming on maps and graphical displays. Also, there are signs to identify each position in the EOC, as well

as portable work stations. Phone and data jacks support the EOC and the electrical outlets are on the emergency generator. Headsets for the phones will be used to enhance communications. There will be five laptop computers assigned to the EOC for support of operations.

To further enhance communications, there is backup emergency communications support in the form of mobile phone system with air cards and ham radio capability. There are information books in the EOC with critical info as well as phone books.

There is also food, water and cots/blankets, as well as portable lavatories for any extended emergency.

As a City, we hope to never have to use this space, but to borrow a phrase from the Boy Scouts, it's best to, "Be Prepared."

## Mayor's Letter, continued from cover

A first class medical emergency system depends on three factors: an efficient 911 system, then the first responder team (our top rated Fire Department) and lastly, the ambulance service. The City is actively pursuing taking over 911 from the County in 2009. Activating this new service is another new item in the budget that accounts for \$2.5 million.

Folks urged various Councilmembers to install sidewalks in their neighborhoods. A total sidewalk program for the entire City is estimated at \$69 million. Here, too, a dent will be made a little bit at a time, where the greatest needs exist. School zones obviously head the list, but major arteries with traffic also call for sidewalks.

Bottom line: Our conservative fiscal management has left us in wonderful shape by the end of this fiscal year. Assuming new responsibilities means

new expenditures. The City is committed to maintaining the 16 percent reserve, which is part of prudent management in the event of a downturn in revenues. The surplus we were able to generate this year is a welcome financing tool to make a beginning on the many capital improvement projects, including certain road projects that have been concepts for years but need implementation.

As we head into our new fiscal year, we thank you, our residents and business owners, for your countless hours of input, which have made this City a great success. The councilmembers and I look forward to implementing these goals.



Mayor Eva Galambos, PhD  
City of Sandy Springs



## City Expands Web Site Functionality and Look

The City of Sandy Springs is always looking for new and innovative ways to get its messages out to the public. Recently, we have begun to add enhanced functionality to our Web site, such as news feeds and podcasts that allow visitors to receive the latest news and information about the City on their desktops, mobile devices or mp3 players.

In addition, by mid-summer, we will have given [www.sandyspringsga.org](http://www.sandyspringsga.org) a facelift. While the underlying navigation and content of the site remains the same, we hope that this new look will provide a more aesthetic and user-friendly environment.

It is our intention to continue to improve the Web site and the services available to our residents and visitors. A survey for feedback was posted on the City's Web site, distributed with the April E-Blast and made available at the Open House meeting on April 14th. The results of this survey give us a better understanding of enhancements that are needed. We have many plans already in the works, so please continue to visit [www.sandyspringsga.org](http://www.sandyspringsga.org) in the coming months for more updates.

# Greenprint Sandy Springs Defines Goals for the Future

Greenprint Sandy Springs is a partnership between the City of Sandy Springs and The Trust for Public Land (TPL) funded by the City, the Friends of Sandy Springs, a donation from the UPS Foundation to the Sandy Springs Conservancy and an anonymous donor to TPL. The group will be creating a strategic plan that encompasses communications and will identify decision making tools. The goals are to:

- Improve the ability to access the river for fishing, boating, paddling and walking;
- Improve the health of Sandy Springs' natural systems to support water quality, drinking water resource protection and maintain habitats for wildlife diversity;
- Make connections between home and work for Sandy Springs residents so they may enjoy the outdoors; and
- Enhance the economic viability of the overall community as a place to live, work and play.

Greenprint is a modeling application which helps local governments and communities make informed decisions about how they want to grow smartly while promoting and protecting their highest recreation and conservation values.

Over the next six months, a steering committee will help guide the process as well as an appointed group of stakeholders who represent a variety of recreational, environmental, civic and neighborhood interests. The goals set here will be used to create a long-term conservation, parks and greenspace vision for the City. For more information on the Greenprint, contact Dan Coffey, community relations coordinator, at [dan.coffey@sandyspringsga.org](mailto:dan.coffey@sandyspringsga.org).



## Ponding on Roadways Can Be Dangerous



When storm drains clog from debris such as grass clippings and other yard waste and trash, and a heavy rain occurs, dangerous roadway ponding may happen. There are 4,000 storm drains in the City of Sandy Springs, and it takes the Public Works staff about a year to clean out 1,000 of

them—that's an average of three a day. Half of these are clogged with yard waste according to Ron Adderley, Sandy Springs field services manager.

"This creates a hazard to our traveling public," he said. "When it rains, and the drains are clogged, ponding can definitely occur. We want to get these drains cleaned out as quickly as possible. That's why it's important to not blow yard debris into the streets."

### Following are tips for driving in heavy rain:

- Rain reduces traction and causes tires to hydroplane. Slow your speed accordingly.
- Water on roads may be deeper than it looks. Watch for vehicles travelling too fast. They can throw up blinding sheets of water.
- Don't cross rain-swollen washes. You can be caught in a flash flood that can sweep your vehicle and its contents away.
- Pay attention to hazard signs and roadblocks. Ignoring them threatens life and property and can result in enforcement action by police.
- Stuck in a wash: (Control of a vehicle is lost in six inches of water. Most vehicles will begin to float in two feet of water.) If you have a phone, call 911. If you can, climb onto the roof and wait to be rescued. If the water is still low and you can wade to safety, do so, but beware of floating debris.

The Sandy Springs Police Department conducted its second Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics on May 29th. About one dozen officers jogged from City Hall to Police Headquarters to raise awareness for Special Olympics. So far, officers have not only raised awareness but also raised approximately \$14,000 toward their \$25,000 goal. The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics is the largest national fundraiser for the charity. All the money raised covers the athletes' expenses to all three yearly games. Last year, the Department raised \$19,500, and a total of \$750,000 was raised statewide. This year's state goal is \$800,000. To make a contribution, one can mail checks made out to Special Olympics to the police department in care of Lt. Bo Eskew, 5995 Barfield Road, Sandy Springs, GA 30328, or drop it by the Police Department front desk.





## Paving at Night Saves Time, Money

Residents and visitors alike may wonder why the City paves during the nighttime hours of 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. Sunday through Thursday. The answer is quite simple. According to Ron Adderley, field services manager for the City of Sandy Springs, when projects are done during the daytime hours, it can triple the project completion timeline and cost a tremendous amount more. "Working at night gives paving crews decreased traffic volumes allowing for the increased safety of workers, as well as the traveling public and the work gets completed faster," he said.

Crews recently completed all six nighttime repaving projects. These include: Northside Drive from New Northside to Harris Trail, Mount Paran from Jett Road to Rebel Trail, Johnson Ferry Road from the Georgia 400 Bridge to the DeKalb County line, Hammond Drive from the Georgia 400 Bridge to the DeKalb County line, Allen Road and New Northside Drive.

Working on these paving projects at night allows the crews to get the job done more quickly with fewer burdens on the traveling public, which saves not only time, but money, Adderley added. The public is asked to use extreme caution when entering work zones; it is not only for your safety, but the safety of the crews working in the area.

## SSFD Uses Fire Safety House as Education Tool



The Sandy Springs Fire Rescue Department has a new home—it's in the form of the Sandy Springs Fire Safety House. Although no firefighters actually live in the Fire Safety House because it travels around the City, valuable lessons about fire safety can be learned here from the City's men and women in blue.

The mobile unit is a towable 35-foot classroom with two separate rooms, each seating about 12-15 individuals at a time. It has an internal multimedia display, high-speed internet hook-ups, a self-contained generator and a 9-1-1 training system. There is also a simulated smoke system, which puts simulated smoke in the two rooms; a kitchen area with a working microwave, stove, sink and cabinets; a bedroom with a controllable smoke alarm and small bed; a simulated fireplace; a door that heats up; and a bedroom window with a fixed, permanent ladder to train on secondary escape routes.

Of the \$78,000 cost of the Fire Safety House, the SSFD received a grant from the Department of Homeland Security's Fire Prevention Program for \$62,000. The balance was funded by the City. To schedule to Fire Safety House for your next event, call the City's Citizen Response Center at 770-730-5600 and ask to speak with the Fire Department administrative assistant.

**The classroom enables firefighters to provide and teach the following programs:**

- Fire safety
- Crawl low under smoke
- Stop, drop and roll
- EDITH (Exit, Drills In The Home)
- How to report a fire
- First Aid
- AED training
- Severe weather awareness, including visual and audio effects
- Water safety (life jacket)
- Bike/helmet safety

*Hammond Park, continued from cover*



director for the City of Sandy Springs, the City is beginning to renovate and upgrade its existing facilities and then will look to develop new parks and facilities as more funding sources are made available.

The City is currently implementing elements of the Recreation and Parks Master Plan, which was adopted in November 2007. "We are in the process of getting bids for minor repairs needed at the Hammond Park location, such as roof repair on the office building, some electrical work and some fencing repairs, as well as converting the gym to a gymnastics facility," Young said. Recently, contractors brought in bids to share with the City

staff. These proposals outlined the contractors' concepts for the enhancement of Hammond Park, including new amenities and services for park participants and staff.

## Contact Us

Sandy Springs Web site: [www.sandyspringsga.org](http://www.sandyspringsga.org)

Sandy Springs Citizen Response Center: 770.730.5600